

As MCDD Gets Ready to Ramp Up Preparedness Messages, *Plan 9* is Ready to Help

The Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at the Kennedy Krieger Institute is one center in a national network of University Centers of Excellence, federally funded by the U.S. Administration on Developmental Disabilities. It is committed to helping people with developmental disabilities maximize their potential and enjoy success in community life.

MCDD accomplishes this mission through training, technical assistance, research, community service, and information dissemination. It is within the dissemination function that MCDD and the Montgomery County APC's missions intersect. MCDD is charged with providing information and programs across the state to individuals to assist families and caregivers. "Emergency Preparedness is one of our 25 programs and a key community service," said Christopher Smith, MCDD's Director.

Jackie Stone, Director of MCDD's Resource Finder, first learned about *Plan 9* materials at an emergency preparedness summit sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Disabilities. "Plan 9 was easy to read and figure out. It is simple and to the point," said Stone. *Plan 9* is one of the components of Montgomery APC's *Plan to Be Safe Campaign*.

"We have disseminated the Plan 9 flyer in a variety of settings," Stone said. These settings include lectures, health fairs, community meetings, and meetings with individual family members and caregivers. "Any time we meet with parents, caregivers, health care providers, or service coordinators, we give out the *Plan 9* brochure. It's a good tool to have available."

"We also focus on emergency preparedness through our information dissemination service, the Resource Finder," said Smith. The Resource Finder is a robust portal through which users can access a wide variety of services and programs, and includes information on Emergency Preparedness through a link to the Maryland Department of Disabilities website.

"We are ready to ramp up dissemination of emergency preparedness information," said Smith. Later this year, they will begin including *Plan 9* in the materials given to all Kennedy Krieger patients upon discharge. "We don't want to reinvent the wheel," he said. "It's a classic example of using what you have around."

In addition, Smith added, "We are expanding our outreach to childcare providers. Up to now we have not done a good job of communicating about emergency preparedness with the childcare community." As part of this outreach, Kennedy Krieger is adding a new section to its website called, "It's All About Disaster Preparedness." Montgomery APC's materials will be featured prominently there.

Smith and Stone consider snow and ice, flooding, spring rains, and power outages to be among the most likely emergency scenarios for their region. "We probably won't see as much snow as we did last year," Smith said, referring to the Snowmageddon of 2009-10 in the Baltimore-Washington area. "But if we do, we will be prepared."

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Perhaps as a result of that weather emergency, the staff at MCDD has observed an increased awareness of emergency preparedness among their constituents. “Now we have people calling and asking for emergency preparedness programs,” said Stone. “If anyone asks, we are available.”